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Identical letters dated 16 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter that represents the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (see annex).

I would greatly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 16 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

1. The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and adopt the necessary measures with regard to Israel in view of its continuing violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) on an almost daily basis, as officially documented by the United Nations on the basis of the reports of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the letters from Lebanon addressed to the United Nations. Israel has not denied these violations but, rather, has confirmed that it is continuing to carry them out, with clear disregard for its obligations under Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

2. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the invalidity of the claims and allegations made in both the most recent Larsen report and the latter's briefing to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) and, also, of the information contained in the most recent periodic report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) with regard to what the report terms "breaches of the arms embargo." The Syrian Arab Republic is surprised at the acceptance by the United Nations of these fabricated claims put forward mainly by Israeli intelligence sources which, themselves, have subsequently repeated and touted these claims as coming from the Secretary-General and the United Nations, knowing that the Secretary-General had indicated in paragraph 38 of his report that the Israeli Government "has not provided any further specific evidence in support of these claims." In this context, the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to remind the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council of the fact that Israel's accusation that Syria is smuggling weapons is baseless; Israel is an enemy of Syria and occupies part of its territories in contravention of international law and scores of relevant Security Council resolutions. Moreover, Israel's claim that it possesses evidence is, in itself, flagrant evidence that Israel is in contravention of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), as the claim is an implicit admission that Israel is violating Lebanese airspace at the Syrian borders, which in this case enables it to photograph any vegetable or goods truck and tout the pictures as being of trucks carrying weapons.

3. In this connection, the Syrian Arab Republic points to the statements made by the Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence and the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, in which they denied that the army leadership was conveying information on the smuggling of arms to Palestinian factions across the Syrian-Lebanese borders to the Lebanese Government. This was the second statement made by the Minister for Defence, who had previously denied categorically that even "a gnat" was crossing the border. The Report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team supported the veracity of this position in its paragraph 45, which stated that the Lebanese authorities "did not present the Team with reports on seizure of weapons or ammunition at any of the four official border crossing points since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006)." Moreover, it stated in paragraph 120 that "all seizures were of traditional smuggled goods, such as diesel fuel, clothes, cement or food. No seizures of weapons or explosives were made.

Although a few seizures of illegal weapons have been reported, according to the border security agencies none were in direct connection with a border-crossing activity and none has been documented en route from across the Syrian border. In all cases known to the Team, the claim has been that they were internal weapons transports between different locations inside Lebanon."

4. The Syrian Arab Republic would like to express its surprise at the discrepancies contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). In paragraphs 14, 16, 56, 58 and 64, the report is critical of Israel's continued, almost daily violations of Lebanon's sovereignty that occurred under the gaze of UNIFIL. Those violations numbered as many as 32 in a single day. Nonetheless, the Secretary-General welcomes the words of appreciation expressed to him and other United Nations personnel by a number of senior Israeli political and military officials, and their acknowledgement of the new strategic realities created by the deployment of UNIFIL in Lebanon (paragraphs 56 and 62). However, what is most regrettable is the inability of the Security Council to take a single measure that would deter Israel and put an end to its encroachments and provocations, and its inability to address the root cause of the conflict in the region, namely the Israeli occupation of Arab territories.

5. The Syrian Arabic Republic would like to clarify once again that the high-level contacts between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic regarding border control have not ceased. In fact, during the period 6 December 2005 to 30 April 2007, there were 12 meetings between Syrian and Lebanese border-control officials. Thus we are surprised that, in paragraph 48, the report states that "no movement has been reported by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on reactivating the Lebanese-Syrian border committee". It should be noted that we provided the Secretary-General with a detailed listing of those meetings and that we will continue to inform him and the Security Council of future meetings.

6. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the demarcation of borders is a bilateral sovereign matter that should be undertaken by the Syrian and Lebanese Governments.

7. The Syrian Arab Republic would like to point out that with regard to Shab'a Farms, the report of the Secretary-General was not impartial, objective or comprehensive in its conclusion that the Syrian position on this matter contradicts Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The Secretary-General ignores the reason for the Syrian position in that regard, which we conveyed to him, namely the continued occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan. The Security Council, in paragraph 18 of its resolution 1701 (2006), stressed the importance of, and the need to achieve, a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of all relevant Security Council resolutions.

8. The Syrian Arab Republic recalls once again that it has doubled the number of border guards on the Syrian side and that it has confiscated weapons that had been smuggled from Lebanon into the Syrian Arab Republic and from Iraq to Lebanon via the Syrian Arab Republic. We informed the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council of that in our identical letters numbered 169 of 4 May 2007 and during his meeting with the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. This was confirmed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 39 of his report. We would like to point out, in that regard, that the Syrian Arab Republic has

requested of a number of European States to provide it with technical equipment for monitoring its borders and that that request was noted in that same paragraph of the Secretary-General's report. However, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to receive an affirmative reply to its request from those States.

9. The Syrian Arab Republic would like to clarify that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon is governed by Lebanese-Palestinian agreements that pre-date the adoption of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and to which the Syrian Arab Republic has no relation. The term "green borders" is contrived and has not been agreed upon by the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon.

10. The Syrian Arab Republic re-emphasizes that it strongly condemns the attack by suspicious elements on the Spanish contingent of UNIFIL.

11. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the importance of the fact that the Security Council, when carrying out its mandate to maintain international peace and security, should not deal with the region's problems selectively, and stresses the need to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East on the basis of all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference and the Arab Peace Initiative.